

A Very Brief Introduction to Hieratic

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Joshua Aaron ROBERSON

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About this document

The present, short *Introduction* was designed as an overview of the basic principles of the Hieratic script, in conjunction with a representative sample of diachronic sign forms, from the Old Kingdom through the Ramesside era. This concise presentation was intended to address a basic problem that confronts most beginners in Hieratic: Faced with a text that looks more or less like gibberish, the only life-preserver thrown to you is Georg MÖLLER's *Hieratische Paläographie*, with its seemingly endless parade of orthographic variants. However, there can be little doubt that most of these variants—which are exceptionally useful to the expert as dating criteria—serve mainly to confuse the beginner. In addition, the idiosyncratic organization of the *Paläographie* is notoriously counter-intuitive, due largely to the fact that MÖLLER's signs appear in thematic groups that are similar, but not identical, to those of GARDINER's sign list.¹ Anyone who has struggled through the process of learning Hieratic knows the frustration that arises when progress slows to a snail's pace, as you search the *Paläographie*—page by page, sign by sign, and variant by variant—for that one perfect match. Therein, I think, lies the problem. Of course, no method can ever obviate completely the occasional need for a sign-by-sign search, but any tips or tricks that can minimize that route of last resort should be exploited, as far as possible. To that end, the signs, etc., presented in this *Introduction* have been organized according to the same principles used to learn the Hieroglyphic script, as opposed to thematic sign-categories. Thus, §§2–3 present the mono-literal signs in phonetic order together as a group (p. 7, Table 2), followed by common determinatives and ideograms (p. 8, Table 3), common bi-literals (p. 9–11, Table 4), and tri-literals (p. 11–12, Table 5), again in phonetic order. This division by sign function, rather than sign form, encourages the student to build upon reading skills cultivated already with regard to Hieroglyphic Egyptian, through identification of phonemes and phonetic complements, placement of determinatives, etc. In addition, the selection of a relatively small numbers of Hieratic forms—typically a single variant each from the Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, Dynasty 18, Dynasty 19, and Dynasty 20—encourages the student to focus less upon the palaeographic “noise” of the individual scribe's hand and more upon the underlying *gestalt* (§2) linking all of the Hieratic variants to their corresponding Hieroglyphs. The following sections (§§4–6) presents some of the common difficulties that emerge directly from production of cursive texts, namely, the use of similar (or identical) strokes for otherwise dissimilar Hieroglyphic signs; the use of distinct Hieratic signs for similar Hieroglyphs; reduction of iconicity, resulting in the collapse of distinct sign forms; and the use of ligatures. The final sections (§§8–9) provide a concise overview of the regnal dating system and numbers. It should go without saying that the present division of material and the selection of sign variants were deeply subjective endeavors, reflecting my personal experience with the Hieratic script. Other scholars would doubtless divide the material differently, or select different/more/less Hieratic variants. However, the nature of Hieratic is such that one benefits tremendously from broad consultation with multiple references, as the proliferation of specialized, genre- and text-specific palaeographies will attest (see ‘General References’, below). Thus, I have compiled the present *Introduction* as one more tool, which, I hope, might lighten the new student's burden, when faced with Hieratic for the first time. Above all, it serves as a companion and gateway to MÖLLER's more robust *Paläographie*, which remains the foundation for any serious study of the Hieratic writing system and its change over time.²

1. For a convenient re-organization of the Middle Kingdom forms in MÖLLER's *Paläographie* according to GARDINER's sign-list, see SCHRAUDER et al. 2011; for a concise index of MÖLLER's numbers relative to those of GARDINER, see also VERVLOESEM 2006.
2. In this regard, note especially the Digital Hieratic project of Mainz University, which aims to create a comprehensive and searchable archive of Hieratic signs (for project overview, see VERHOEVEN et al. 2017).

General References

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

































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§1 Introduction

Hieratic is the cursive form of the Egyptian Hieroglyphic script.¹ However, unlike Hieroglyphic, which was inscribed primarily on stone monuments and intended to last for eternity, Hieratic was written most often with a brush and ink on papyri and ostraca,² as the preferred script for day-to-day record keeping, private and official correspondence, magical and medical documents, and literature. In addition, whereas Hieroglyphic texts might be written either from left-to-right or right-to-left, Hieratic was written exclusively right-to-left.

The earliest, “true” Hieratic documents discovered thus far date to the Fourth Dynasty, from the reign of Khufu.³ Hieratic continued to be employed alongside the Hieroglyphic script for the remainder of Pharaonic history, with the latest known Hieratic texts dated to the third century of the Common Era.⁴ Around the transition from Dynasty 25 to 26, so-called “Abnormal Hieratic” developed into the Demotic script, attested first from the reign of Psamtek I (c. 650 BCE).⁵ Furthermore, seven Demotic signs, derived from Hieratic antecedents (including individual signs and Late Egyptian group writing/syllabic orthographies), were adapted eventually into the seven Coptic signs used for six native Egyptian sounds, which lack direct counterparts in the Greek alphabet, plus the bi-graph indicating /ti/ (table 1).⁶

Table 1. Hieroglyphic – Hieratic – Demotic – Coptic correspondences.

Hieroglyph(s)	OK-FIP	MK	NK/31P	Demotic	Coptic	Coptic name	Coptic pronunciation
 š(z)						“shai”	sh
 f						“fai”	f
 h(z)						“chai”	ch
 h(w)	--	--				“hori”	h
 d(z)						“djandja”	j
 k						“kyima,” “chima”	ky ~ ch
 dj(t)						“ti”	tee

- Both terms derive from the Greek, meaning respectively the “priestly” script and “holy carved” script. Compare also cursive Hieroglyphs, for which see M.A. ALI, “Die Kursivhieroglyphen: eine paläographische Betrachtung,” *Göttinger Miszellen* 180 (2001): 9–21.
- Also note lapidary Hieratic, which was incised in stone with signs related to, but distinct from, their brush-drawn counterparts; see, e.g., M.S. ALI, *Hieratische Ritzinschriften aus Theben* (Wiesbaden, 2002).
- See P. TALLET, *Les papyrus de la mer Rouge I: Le “journal de Merer” (Papyrus Jarf A et B)*, MIFAO 136 (Cairo, 2017); for “archaic hieratic,” attested from Third Dynasty, see MÖLLER, *Hieratische Paläographie* I, 2–3.
- H. SATZINGER, “Hieratisch,” *LÄ* II, 1188.
- J. JOHNSON, *Thus Wrote Onchsheshonqy*, SAOC 45 (Chicago, 2000, third edition), 1; for Abnormal Hieratic, see K. DONKER VAN HEEL, *A Very Easy Crash Course in Abnormal Hieratic* (Leiden, 2013).
- Except where noted, all Hieratic signs adapted from MÖLLER’s *Paläographie* or *Lesestücke*.

§2 Basic Strategies: Context. Mono-literals, Determinatives, Logograms. *Gestalt*.

Hieratic, like modern cursive handwriting, employed simplified versions of more formal or elaborate signs, which were frequently ligatured together, to form connected groups (§9). In addition, because of the decreased iconicity of cursive writing in general, a great many Hieratic signs and groups look very similar, or even identical, to one another (§6). Consequently, **recognizing the correct sign(s) in a group requires application of contextual knowledge**: What vocabulary and grammar are expected in the genre and time period in question? What signs do we expect in a conventional orthography of a suspected word or group? Which word(s) immediately precede the word or group in question? Which word(s) immediately follow it? Are there any complements, which might help identify a preceding or following bi- or tri-literal sign? Which sign(s) are the determinatives? Etc. Put simply, **the more familiar you are with the grammar, vocabulary, and orthography of Hieroglyphic inscriptions, the easier you will find identification of Hieratic signs and reading Hieratic texts**. Fortunately, the spellings of Hieratic words correspond more or less to the spellings of their Hieroglyphic counterparts, such that a one-to-one transcription from the former to the latter script is almost always possible.¹ Consequently, the same strategies that help the beginning student learn to recognize and read words in the Hieroglyphic script apply also to Hieratic. Above all, the beginner should become familiar with the mono-literal signs of the Egyptian “alphabet” (Table 2), which might spell individual sounds or occur as phonetic complements to multi-literal signs, as well as the most common determinatives and logograms (Table 3), which aid tremendously in the identification of word-divisions.

Each of the following tables includes a very abbreviated selection of Hieratic sign-forms from the Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms, with their corresponding numbers from Gardiner’s sign-list and the *Hieratische Paläographie* of Georg MÖLLER. Critically, these tables are not intended to provide a comprehensive list of variants, for which the student should consult the volumes cited above, among the ‘General References’ (p. 4). Rather, the tables are intended to convey the *gestalt* of the various Hieratic signs, which is to say, **the overall impression and shape that links the Hieratic variants to each other and to their Hieroglyphic counterparts**. The *gestalt* may be observed throughout the long history of a given sign, even as the number, arrangement, size, and proportion of the various Hieratic strokes change—sometimes dramatically—in the hand of different authors and in different time periods. In general, Hieratic signs resemble their Hieroglyphic counterparts more closely in the earlier periods, becoming more cursive and exhibiting decreased iconicity over the course of time. In fact, many late Ramesside Hieratic signs bear no obvious connection to their highly iconic, Hieroglyphic counterparts (compare, for instance, the Dyn. 20 forms of signs G1 and G43, from Table 2, and G7 and P1, from Table 3). However, when the strokes and ligatures of a sign from a later period are viewed in relation to those of the period(s) preceding it, and thence to the original Hieroglyph, the *gestalt* emerges. A good, working familiarity with the *gestalten* of these and other common signs will prove invaluable as you begin to read Hieratic texts, greatly reducing the amount of time spent searching, sign-by-sign, through palaeographic catalogs. In this process, it is incumbent upon the student to bear in mind that **Hieratic is handwriting and handwriting is variable**. The “standard” sign forms that appear in the palaeographies are merely representative examples. In practice, signs will vary from these “standards” to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the time period and the preferences of the individual scribe. Greater awareness and recognition of the *gestalten* allows us to filter out the noise created by these variables and zero-in on the underlying information that the scribe sought to encode.

1. In this regard, Hieratic differs markedly from Demotic, which relies much more heavily upon ligatured word groups and much less upon individually distinct signs (see JOHNSON, “*Onchsheshonqy*,” 5, ¶7).

Table 2. Mono-literal signs.

Gardiner/ Möller nrs.	Hieroglyph	OK-FIP	MK	Dyn. 18	Dyn. 19	Dyn. 20
G1 / 192	𐩀	𐩀	𐩀	𐩀	𐩀	𐩀
192B	𐩀 abbrev.	𐩀	𐩀	𐩀	𐩀	𐩀
M17 / 282	𐩁	𐩁	𐩁	𐩁	𐩁	𐩁
283	𐩂	𐩂	𐩂	𐩂	𐩂	𐩂
Z4 / 560	𐩂 abbrev. (//)		𐩂	𐩂		𐩂
D36 / 99	𐩃	𐩃	𐩃	𐩃	𐩃	𐩃
G43 / 200	𐩄	𐩄	𐩄	𐩄	𐩄	𐩄
Z7 / 200B	𐩄 abbrev. (𐩄)	𐩄	𐩄	𐩄	𐩄	𐩄
D58 / 124	𐩅	𐩅	𐩅	𐩅	𐩅	𐩅
Q3 / 388	𐩆	𐩆	𐩆	𐩆	𐩆	𐩆
I9 / 263	𐩇	𐩇	𐩇	𐩇	𐩇	𐩇
G17 / 196	𐩈	𐩈	𐩈	𐩈	𐩈	𐩈
196B	𐩈 abbrev.		𐩈	𐩈		
N35 / 331	𐩉	𐩉	𐩉	𐩉	𐩉	𐩉
D21 / 91	𐩊	𐩊	𐩊	𐩊	𐩊	𐩊
91B	𐩊 abbrev.		𐩊	𐩊	𐩊	𐩊
O4 / 342	𐩋	𐩋	𐩋	𐩋	𐩋	𐩋
V28 / 525	𐩌	𐩌	𐩌	𐩌	𐩌	𐩌
Aa1 / 574	𐩍	𐩍	𐩍	𐩍	𐩍	𐩍
F32 / 169	𐩎	𐩎	𐩎	𐩎	𐩎	𐩎
O34 / 366	𐩏/s	𐩏	𐩏	𐩏	𐩏	𐩏
S29 / 432	𐩐	𐩐	𐩐	𐩐	𐩐	𐩐
N37 / 335	𐩑	𐩑	𐩑	𐩑	𐩑	𐩑
N29 / 319	𐩒	𐩒	𐩒	𐩒	𐩒	𐩒
V31A / 511	𐩓	𐩓	𐩓	𐩓	𐩓	𐩓
W11 / 395	𐩔	𐩔	𐩔	𐩔	𐩔	𐩔
X1 / 575	𐩕	𐩕	𐩕	𐩕	𐩕	𐩕
V13-14 / 528	𐩖	𐩖	𐩖	𐩖	𐩖	𐩖
D46 / 115	𐩗	𐩗	𐩗	𐩗	𐩗	𐩗
I10 / 250	𐩘	𐩘	𐩘	𐩘	𐩘	𐩘

Table 3. Some common determinatives and logograms.

Gardiner / Möller nrs.	Hieroglyph	OK-FIP	MK	Dyn. 18	Dyn. 19	Dyn. 20
A1 / 33						
33B	A1 abbrev.					
A2 / 35						
35B	A2 abbrev.					
A17 / 30						
A24 / 15						
B1 / 61						
61B	B1 abbrev.					
D40 / 105						
D54 / 119						
F27 / 166						
G7 / 188						
188B	G7 abbrev.					
G37 / 197	 [BAD]					
M1 / 266						
M2 / 268						
N2 / 301						
N5 / 303						
N23 / 324						
N25 / 322						
O1 / 340						
O49 / 339						
P1 / 374						
Y1 / 538						
538	Y1 abbrev.					
Z2 / 561						
561	Z2 abbrev.					



§3 Abbreviated signs. Common bi- and tri-literal signs.

The preceding tables include a number of abbreviated versions of certain signs (book rolls, plurals, first person suffixes and male/female/divine determinatives, the *r*-mouth, and mono-literal birds). These and other abbreviated orthographies were employed because the signs in question were exceedingly common (particularly in ligatures; see §7), and could be simplified—sometimes to just a single stroke or dot—without obscuring the sense of the passage to the ancient reader. Unfortunately, these same abbreviated orthographies can quite easily obscure meaning for the modern reader and provide an additional stumbling block, of which the student must remain aware. In this regard, context again plays a critical role.

In addition to the mono-literals, determinatives, and logograms outlined above, Hieratic also utilizes bi- and tri-literal signs at more or less the same frequency as Hieroglyphic Egyptian. In addition, the use of phonetic complements with multi-literal signs is roughly comparable to Hieroglyphic. Table 4 includes some of the most common bi-literal signs; Table 3 includes common tri-literals. All signs have been organized by phonetic order, to facilitate searching for suspected matches. As discussed above, the ability to search for a suspected sign by phonetic value and familiarity with the signs' underlying *gestalten* can greatly decrease time spent sifting through, potentially, hundreds of signs and variants in the various palaeographic resources.

Table 4. Common bi-literals, by phonetic order.

Gardiner / Möller nrs.	Hieroglyph	OK-Dyn. 11	Dyn. 12-13	Dyn. 18	Dyn. 19	Dyn. 20
F40 / 577 & 172 bis.	zw					
U23 / 485	zb					
G25 / 204	zh					
M18 / 284	jj					
D54 / 119	jw					
F34 / 179	jb					
Aa15 / 327	jm					
W25 / 496	jn					
D4 / 82	jr					
V15 / 529	jt					
V4 / 524	wz					
O29 / 363B	ʿz					
G35 / 215	ʿq					
T21 / 461	wʿ					
E34 / 132	wn					
M42 (Z11) / 564B	wn					

G36 / 198	wr						
G29 / 208	b3						
208	b3 abbrev.						
G29 + R7 / 209	b3						
G41 / 221-222	p3						
O1 / 340	pr						
F22 / 163	ph						
N1 / 300	pt						
U1 / 469	m3						
W19 / 509	mj (mr)						
N35A / 333	mw						
Y5 / 540	mn						
U6 / 465	mr						
U23 / 484	mr						
F31 / 408	ms						
V22 / 459	mḥ						
S43 / 456	md						
D35 / 111	nj						
V30 / 510	nb						
M22A / 288	nn						
E23 / 125	rw						
D56 / 122	rd						
M16 / 279	ḥ3						
N41 / 98	ḥm						
U36 / 590	ḥm						
M2 / 268	ḥn						
D2 / 80	ḥr						

W14 / 502	hz						
M12 / 277	h3						
N28 / 307	h ^c						
M3 / 269	ht						
K4 / 257	h3						
F26 / 165	hn						
T28 / 397	hr						
G38 / 217	z3 (s3)						
O50 / --	zp (sp)						
Y3 / 537	zš (sš)						
Aa17 / 594	s3						
M23 / 289	sw						
T22 / 596	sn						
V29 / 398	sk						
Q1 / 383	st						
M8 / 274	š3						
N40 / 336	šm						
T19 / 460	qs						
D28 / 108	k3						
G28 / 205	gm						
Aa15 / 327	gs		see jm				
N16 + N23 + Z1 / 318	t3						
U33 / 401	tj						
D1 / 79	tp						
U15 / 489	tm						
G47 / 224	t3						
S24 / 365 & 535	tz (ts)						
N26 / 320	dw						
M36 + D21 / 294	dr						

Table 5. Common tri-literals, by phonetic order.

Gardiner / Möller nrs.	Hieroglyph	OK-Dyn. 11	Dyn. 12-13	Dyn. 18	Dyn. 19	Dyn. 20
N12 / 309	<i>ʒbd</i>					
N27 / 321	<i>ʒht</i>					
Z11 / 564	<i>jmj</i>					
A47 / 47-48	<i>jry</i>					
	A47 abbrev.					
S34 / 534	<i>nh</i>					
D34 / 113	<i>h3</i>					
P6 / 380	<i>hc</i>					
D60 / 500	<i>wcb</i>					
V29 / 398	<i>w3h</i>					
S40 / 455	<i>w3š</i>					
N31 / 326	<i>w3t</i>					
M13 / 280	<i>w3d</i>					
M42 (Z11) / 564B	<i>wn</i>	see Table 4 <i>wn</i>				
F25 / 162	<i>whm</i>					
F12 / 148	<i>wsr</i>					
G14 / 193	<i>mwt</i>					
S43 / 456	<i>mdw</i>	see Table 4 <i>md</i>				
F35 / 180	<i>nfr</i>					
R8 / 547	<i>ntr</i>					
M29 / 296	<i>ndm</i>					
M4 / 270	<i>rnp</i>					
F4 / 146	<i>h3t</i>					

O6 / 345	<i>ḥwt</i>						
R4 / 552	<i>ḥtp</i>						
L1 / 258	<i>ḥpr</i>						
F32 / 164	<i>ḥpš</i>						
W17 / 504	<i>ḥnt</i>						
P8 / 381	<i>ḥrw</i>						
U35 / 473	<i>ḥsf</i>						
W9 / 508	<i>ḥnm</i>						
A47 / 47	<i>z3</i>		see <i>jry</i>				
N14 / 314	<i>sb3</i>						
F36 / 181	<i>zm3</i> (<i>sm3</i>)						
S42 / 449	<i>šhm</i>						
M20 / 285	<i>šht</i>						
T33 / 444–445	<i>sšm</i>						
F21 / 158	<i>sḏm</i>						
M26 / 291	<i>šmꜥ</i>						
T18 / 443	<i>šms</i>						
U13 / 600	<i>šnꜥ</i>						
T19 / 460	<i>qrs</i>		see Table 4 <i>qs</i>				
U17 / 467	<i>grg</i>						
O42 / 368	<i>šzp</i> (<i>šsp</i>)						
G4 / 190–191	<i>tjw</i>						
S24 / 365	<i>t3z</i>		see Table 4 <i>tz</i>				
N14 / 314	<i>dw3</i>		see <i>sb3</i>				
D50 / 117	<i>ḏbꜥ</i>						

§4 Dissimilar Hieroglyphic signs with similar Hieratic forms.

Undoubtedly the most troublesome aspect of reading Hieratic is the large number of signs that resemble one another to a greater or lesser degree. In some cases, e.g., the similarity of certain earthenware vessels, the distinction between forms is, to a certain extent, academic. In other cases, similarities of form in the Hieratic do not extend to the signs' Hieroglyphic counterparts. As a result, when we encounter such ambiguous Hieratic signs, we risk calling to mind an incorrect *gestalt*, potentially blocking a sensible interpretation of the word, group, or passage. Fortunately, most Hieratic similarities are relatively superficial, due to the inclusion of **diagnostic ticks or small strokes, which differentiate one sign from another**. Learning to recognize these diagnostic features plays a crucial role in the correct interpretation of a Hieratic text. However, other signs—above all **the exceedingly common mono-literals *r*, *t*, *ṯ*, and *d***—**appear frequently identical**, such that a correct reading depends entirely upon context. The following list includes a very brief but representative selection of signs with similar Hieratic forms (see also §7, Ligatures, below). Each of the Hieratic signs included below dates prior to the New Kingdom.

Table 6. Selection of signs with similar Hieratic forms (pre-New Kingdom).

D21 / 91	D46 / 115	X1 / 575	D54 / 119	F21 / 158	D58 / 124	F25 / 162	R15 / 578

F26 / 165	L2 / 260	O1 / 340	Y3 / 537	M16 / 279	P6 / 380	S34 / 534	V28 / 525

A47 / 47-48	M18 / 284	D19 / 90	Aa32 / 437	U31 / 491	E23 / 125	U13 / 468	V13-V14 / 528	Y1 / 538

§5 Similar Hieroglyphic signs with dissimilar Hieratic forms

In contrast to the signs discussed in the previous section, some Hieratic orthographies are actually easier to distinguish than their Hieroglyphic counterparts. Unfortunately, these relatively transparent signs are more of an exception than a rule. Nevertheless, when reading Hieratic texts, every little bit of clarity and disambiguation that the ancient scribes might have employed should be recognized and exploited.

Table 7. Similar Hieroglyphic signs with dissimilar Hieratic forms (pre-New Kingdom).

A19 / 13 <i>j3w, wr, smsw</i>	A21 / 11 <i>sr</i>	D50 / 117 <i>db</i>	T14 / 457 [FOREIGN]	D23 / 485 <i>3b</i>	D23 / 484 <i>mr</i>
G1 / 192 <i>3</i>	G4 / 191 <i>tjw</i>	G36 / 198 <i>wr</i>	G37 / 197 [BAD]	V29 / 398 <i>w3h</i> (OK-FIP)	V29 / 399 <i>sk</i> (OK-FIP)

§6 Signs with reduced iconicity

Some Hieroglyphic signs exhibit reduced iconicity in Hieratic. This phenomenon results in the collapse of otherwise distinct determinatives and phonograms to generic equivalents, notably, the ʿ-arm, / (D36 / 99) as a generic arm determinative and phonogram, replacing (D37), (D38), (D39), (D40), (D41), (D42), (D43), and (D44); the 33-duck, / (G39 / 216), as a generic determinative for words relating to birds and insects; and the Seth animal, / (E20 / n.a.), replacing (E7), and (E27).²

1. Hieratic sign omitted in MÖLLER, *Paläographie*. See Shipwrecked Sailor, 32, 98 (E20: *nšny*) and 31, 97 (E27: *sr*), respectively (A.H. GARDINER, *Egyptian Grammar*, 460–461, E20 and E27, citing confusion between the two signs).
2. For the various signs and substitutions, see the relevant sign-list entries in GARDINER, *Egyptian Grammar* (Oxford, third edition), 442 ff. Note that the seated Seth animal (E20) does not appear in MÖLLER's *Paläographie*; the example cited above appears in the tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor, 31–32.

§7 Ligatures

One of the hallmarks of cursive writing generally, and of Hieratic specifically, is the use of **ligatures, or connecting strokes**, linking individual signs to create larger groups. The following table includes a selection of common ligatures, focusing on the more cursive—and therefore less easily differentiated—forms. This brief list is intended to give a **general overview of the kinds of stroke simplifications that occur** in ligatures involving, potentially, any two (or more) signs. As a general rule, **more common signs (esp., mono-literals like *m*, *n*, *r*, *t*, etc.), tend to assume more cursive forms and are more likely to create ligatures**. As an interesting corollary to that rule, note that some ligatures become more iconic in the Ramesside era, even as (or perhaps because) individual signs tend generally to lose iconicity in that period.

Table 8. Some common ligatures.

Gardiner / Möller nrs.	Hieroglyphs	OK–Dyn. 11	Dyn. 12–13	Dyn. 18	Dyn. 19	Dyn. 20
D36 + X1 / II, III	𐀓, various					
G29 + V31a / 211	bꜥk					
Q3 + N35 / VI, VIII	pn					
Q3 + X1 / VII	pt					
G17 + D36 / IX, XII	m(ꜥ)					
Y5 + N35 / 540	mn					
G17 + D21 / X, XIII	mr					
G17 + X1 / XI, XIV	mt					
N35 + D21 / XVII, XVIII	nr					
N35 + X1 / XX, XXI	nt					
D21 + X1 / XXIX, XXVI	rt					
D2 + D21 / 80c	ḥr					
R4 + X1 / 552	ḥtp					
X1 + D21 / XLII, XXXVIII	tr					
X1 + X1 / XLIII, XXXIX	tt					
D46 + X1 / XLVI, XL	dt					

§8 Regnal dates.

Regnal dates occur frequently in administrative documents and correspondence, **very often at the beginning of the text, or at the beginning of a discrete section within a text**. The regnal dating formula takes the form: [1] *ḥ3.t-zp* (“regnal year”) + year number of reigning king (see §9), [2] *3bd* (“month”) + month number 1–4, [3] season (*3ḥ.t*, *pr.t*, or *šmw*), and [4] *sw* (“day”) + day number 1–30 (§9).¹ Note that, in many cases, the word (*sw*) was omitted or, alternately, the ☉ determinative of the preceding month name serves double duty as *sw*.

*Table 9. Regnal dates.*²

Möller nrs.	Hieroglyphs		OK–Dyn. 11	Dyn. 12–13	Dyn. 18	Dyn. 19	Dyn. 20
270+403 (see indiv.)	<i>ḥ3.t-zp</i>						
+ number (§9) +							
310	<i>3bd 1</i>						
311	<i>3bd 2</i>						
312	<i>3bd 3</i>						
313	<i>3bd 4</i>						
LX and see indiv.	<i>3ḥ.t</i>						
LXXI and see indiv.	<i>pr.t</i>						
LXXVI and see indiv.	<i>šmw</i>						
303	(<i>sw</i>)						
+ number (§9).							

- For the dating system, see generally, GARDINER, *Egyptian Grammar*, 203–206. Note that some scholars prefer to transliterate the “regnal date” group as *rnp.t-zp* or *rnp.t-ḥsb*; for the reading as *ḥ3.t-zp*, see A.H. GARDINER, “The Reading of the Year Hieroglyph,” *JNES* 8/3 (1949): 165–171.
- Dyn. 20 *ḥ3.t-zp* exemplar adapted from MÖLLER, *Hieratische Lesestücke*, vol. 3, 16, 1; other Ramesside values in Table 9, which do not derive from MÖLLER’s *Paläographie*, taken from P. GRANDET, *Catalogue des Ostraca Hiératiques non littéraires IX* (Cairo: IFAO).

§9 Numbers.

In addition to the month numbers outlined above (§8), other numbers might take different forms, depending on whether they are written with vertical or horizontal strokes and also, to a certain extent, what they modify (e.g. days of the month).¹ The following table includes representative Middle Kingdom and Ramesside-era numbers from 1 to 900, as a general guideline to the most common Hieratic shapes.²

Table 10. Numbers.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
VERTICAL									
MK	𐎁	𐎂	𐎃	𐎄	𐎅	𐎆	𐎇	𐎈	𐎉
Ramesside	𐎁	𐎂	𐎃	𐎄	𐎅	𐎆	𐎇	𐎈	𐎉
HORIZONTAL (dates)	—	=	≡	≡	≡≡	≡≡	≡≡	≡≡	≡≡
MK	𐎁	𐎂	𐎃	𐎄	𐎅	𐎆	𐎇	𐎈	as vert. ↑
Ramesside	as vert. ↑	𐎂	𐎃	𐎄	𐎅	𐎆	𐎇	𐎈	as vert. ↑

	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
VERTICAL	𐎁	𐎂𐎂	𐎃𐎃	𐎄𐎄	𐎅𐎅	𐎆𐎆	𐎇𐎇	𐎈𐎈	𐎉𐎉
MK	𐎁	𐎂	𐎃	𐎄	𐎅	𐎆	𐎇	𐎈	𐎉
Ramesside	𐎁	𐎂	𐎃	𐎄	𐎅	𐎆	𐎇	𐎈	𐎉
HORIZONTAL (dates)	𐎁	𐎂𐎂	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
MK	𐎁	𐎂	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Ramesside	𐎁	𐎂	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900
	𐎁𐎁	𐎁𐎁𐎁	𐎁𐎁𐎁𐎁	𐎁𐎁𐎁𐎁𐎁	𐎁𐎁𐎁𐎁𐎁	𐎁𐎁𐎁𐎁𐎁	𐎁𐎁𐎁𐎁𐎁	𐎁𐎁𐎁𐎁𐎁	𐎁𐎁𐎁𐎁𐎁
MK	𐎁	𐎂	𐎃	𐎄	𐎅	𐎆	𐎇	𐎈	𐎉
Ramesside	𐎁	𐎂	𐎃	𐎄	𐎅	𐎆	𐎇	𐎈	𐎉

1. Note that horizontal numerals designating days of the month are attested from 1–29; the thirtieth day was designated *ꜥꜣꜣ*, “last” day (GARDINER, *Egyptian Grammar*, §264; see, e.g., P. GRANDET, *Catalogue des ostraca* IX, nr. 880, documenting the transition from day 29 to “last day”). For volumetric numerals and measures (grain, etc.), see MÖLLER, *Paläographie*, nrs. 679–712.
2. Note that 100’s from the Ramesside era have been cropped in the middle of the final, trailing stroke to the left. Scribes in this period tended to end the number with a flourish, extending far to the left of the core sign (cf. MÖLLER, *Paläographie*, vol. 2, nrs. 632–640).

